



TALK. READ. SING.® SMARTER BIRDS BOOK WILL SOON BE IN PRINT



First 5 California (F5CA) is pleased to announce the next step in the evolution of Franco, Orson, and Melody, the *Talk. Read. Sing.® Smarter Birds*.

The Smarter Birds will bring their story to life as a children's book, telling the backstory of how they got together.

F5CA's media contractor, Fraser Communications, is working with an illustrator to add new layers and dimension to the loveable birds for the book written by F5CA Chief Deputy Director Diane Levin.

The book is scheduled to be released in early 2018. Stay tuned for more details. ✱

Camille's Corner

Camille Maben, Executive Director, First 5 California



I can remember a time when summer break was three full months long, when work generally slowed down a bit, and sitting on the picnic table out front, visiting with neighbors watching the kids play late-night games of hide-and-seek was typical. But it's August, school is already back in session for most kids, work is busier than ever, and I am missing visits with my neighbors. We are also at a time when our work is more important than ever. As our country stands divided in a way we haven't seen in decades, and poverty rates continue to climb, we need to double down our efforts to support and advocate on behalf of young children and their families.

In July, we welcomed our newest Commissioner, Alejandra Campoverdi. Commissioner Campoverdi has been involved in policy work at the federal and local levels. Her dual language learner and media expertise will be a welcome addition as we go forward with our Dual Language Learner pilot and the *Talk. Read. Sing.®* campaign. You'll find more information on Commissioner Campoverdi in the July Commission meeting recap on page 2.

Implementation of First 5 IMPACT continues to move full-speed ahead at the state and local levels. More children have access to quality programs and services, but we have a long way to go. As we continue to build a quality system of early care and education with access for all, it is easy to get buried in the implementation details. First 5 IMPACT is committed to building a system to serve the "whole child." The system includes health, early education, family engagement, and a high-quality workforce, all necessary components to support young children to become healthy adults. We are committed to working with our partners at the federal, state, and local levels to achieve these goals.

The partnership includes the new California Department of Education Early Education and Support Division Director Sarah Neville-Morgan. Sarah brings a wealth of knowledge, passion, and commitment to this work. As the former Program Deputy at First 5 California, Sarah established some great programs,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

In 1998, California voters passed Proposition 10—the California Children and Families Act—and declared the importance of investing in a better future for California's youngest children. For the past 18 years, the California Children and Families Commission (First 5 California) has established quality standards and invested in the development of programs and services emphasizing improvement in early education, child care, social services, health care, research, and community awareness. The vision of First 5 California is for all of the state's children to receive the best possible start in life and thrive.

First 5 California State Commission Meeting Highlights, July 2017

The State Commission held its most recent meeting on July 27, 2017, in Sacramento. The Commission welcomed and swore in its newest member, Alejandra Campoverdi. Ms. Campoverdi, a Senate appointee, is a native of Los Angeles and joins the Commission after working in various capacities for the Obama administration, including as the first-ever White House Deputy Director of Hispanic Media. Additionally, while serving as Senior Advisor for Innovation and Communications Strategy for Univision Network News, she assisted in the launching of Fusion. She also served as Managing Editor of #EmergingUS, and later as Director of Multicultural Content for the *Los Angeles Times*. She is a graduate of USC's Annenberg School of Communication and Journalism, and received her Master of Public Policy from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, where she serves on the Advisory Board of Harvard's Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics, and Public Policy. Ms. Campoverdi volunteers teaching a weekly creative writing class to incarcerated youth in Los Angeles' Central Juvenile Hall for Inside Out Writers.

During the meeting, the Commission took action on the following items:

- Approval for two years of up to \$1.7 million to continue fiscal support of the California Health Interview Survey (CHIS)
- Approval of appointments to Commission Advisory Committees:
 - Executive—George Halvorson and Joyce Iseri
 - Public Education and Outreach—George Halvorson and Alejandra Campoverdi
 - Legislative—Conway Collis and George Halvorson
 - Research and Evaluation—Muntu Davis and Joyce Iseri
 - Program—Lupe Jaime and Shana Hazan
 - Fiscal—Joyce Iseri and Lupe Jaime
 - Strategic Planning—Shana Hazan and Muntu Davis

Two substantive information items also were presented to the Commission. The first was a presentation from staff from the American Institutes for Research on key findings from the final impact report for the Transitional Kindergarten (TK) study, funded in part by First 5 California. For more information on the TK Study, see page 5.



The second informational presentation featured an exemplary and successful local effort—the Alameda County Fathers Corp (ACFC) program. The presentation was included on the agenda in response to the Commission's desire to learn about programs that focus on father-specific services and efforts to build awareness about the importance of dads in their children's healthy development. The Fathers Corp program was established in 2013 as a collaborative effort between First 5 Alameda County, the Alameda County Health Care Services Agency, and the Alameda County Social Services Agency. The ACFC has convened a learning community of male service providers to offer training opportunities on early childhood topics and other topics specific to the needs of fathers, and a place for peer support and networking. ✱

2018 COMMISSION MEETING DATES

January 25 | April 26 | July 26 | October 25

The State of Family Leave

California has been at the forefront of American family leave policy, benefits, and job protections for working parents since 2002. However, California and the nation still lag far behind the rest of the industrial world with our meager paid and unpaid family leave benefits and protections.

In 2002, California led the way by passing SB 1661 (Kuehl), which established up to six weeks of paid family leave for working parents to care for and bond with their newborn child, or care for a family member suffering from a serious injury or illness.

This ground-breaking benefit is especially valuable to families of newborns as brain science research has clearly established from the time babies are born, everything they see, hear, and touch becomes a learning experience that stimulates their brain growth—especially in those earliest months. From birth to age 5, a child’s brain experiences its greatest neurological “growth spurt” and lays the foundation for the brain’s future architecture. California’s Paid Family Leave Program allows parents to care for, nurture, and interact with babies during their most vulnerable and perhaps most crucial time—a value that pays dividends throughout their lifetime.

The 2002 law, paid fully through payroll deductions from all employees, originally provided 55 percent of lost wages, up to a cap. Last year, this law was updated by AB 908 (Gomez) with the help of California’s legislators, stakeholders, and Governor Brown to provide a modest increase to benefits. The new benefit now increases lost wage replacement to 60 percent for highest wage earners and up to 70 percent for the lowest wage earners.

While paid leave is available only in California, New Jersey, and Rhode Island, other states have passed laws that will begin paying benefits in the near future, such as New York in 2018, and Washington and the District of Columbia both beginning benefits in 2020. In addition, the City of San Francisco now requires employers to supplement the existing California state paid family leave benefit in order to provide 100 percent of an employee’s gross weekly wages, up to a cap.

The crucial policy foundation for California’s paid family leave program is our federal and state unpaid family leave job protection laws. Parents cannot afford to access paid family leave if they risk losing their jobs. In this arena, California law mirrors long-standing federal

law granting parents from large employers the right to up to 12 weeks of job protection for family leave. This federal and state policy leaves out any parents working for employers with less than 50 employees—the supermajority of California parents.

Now California is taking the policy lead yet again. This year, Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson has proposed SB 63, which looks to update unpaid family leave protections for more Californians and cover employees of businesses with 20 or more employees. This expanded job protection would ensure more parents have the ability to take time off to support their new babies’ development and simultaneously access paid leave benefits.

The opportunities to improve California’s family leave benefits and protections are within grasp of our policy makers. Seizing these opportunities will allow California to invest precious time for talking, reading, and singing with each of our newborns, and establish the Golden State as the leader that it is, and should be, for children and families. ✱



COUNTY HIGHLIGHTS

FIRST 5 Santa Clara Releases New “Potter the Otter” Books

Encouraging Families to Prepare Healthy Meals Together

Brittany Satkoski, Assistant Director of Communications, FIRST 5 Santa Clara County

FIRST 5 Santa Clara County partnered with the California Department of Public Health’s Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Branch, and developed a new set of Potter the Otter books encouraging young children and families to prepare and eat healthy meals together.

The new books, which include a storybook, cookbook, and activity book, are approved by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for use in the SNAP-Ed program supporting evidence-based nutrition education and obesity prevention projects. This allows public health departments and government agencies throughout California and the United States to purchase these books with federal funds.

To support the release of the newest Potter the Otter books, ads encouraging young children and families to drink water, eat healthy, and be active are popping up on light rail trains, buses, and billboards throughout Santa Clara County.

The new public awareness campaign features local children alongside Potter the Otter engaging in healthy habits, such as drinking water like an otter, munching like a rabbit, and running like a cheetah. The campaign features bilingual video messages from Potter the Otter running on television and YouTube encouraging healthy eating and water consumption.

“We are excited for this opportunity to share Potter the Otter’s healthy message with all young children and families,” said FIRST 5 Santa Clara Chief Executive Officer Jolene Smith. “These new books promote healthy eating and create meaningful opportunities for parents and caregivers to engage with their children.”

The new storybook, *Potter the Otter’s Market Adventure*, follows Potter on his journey through the market where he discovers new, colorful fruits and vegetables to try with his friends. The book features information for parents and caregivers, including the daily recommendation of fruits and vegetables for children under age 5, and how to select foods that are in season.



The healthy eating messages are reinforced through the *Cooking with Potter the Otter* cookbook, which features fun, family-friendly recipes full of healthy fruits and vegetables. Each recipe includes a tip to involve young children in meal preparation and prompts encouraging discussions on colors, numbers, and shapes.

These books, along with the activity book, are available for purchase individually or packaged together as part of the Potter the Otter Activity Kit. The kit features an evaluation postcard to help FIRST 5 Santa Clara measure the impact the books have on behavior change.

To purchase the books, or view the videos, ads, and more, visit the Potter the Otter website at www.pottertheotter.com. ✨

Transitional Kindergarten Study Confirms Benefits

The American Institutes for Research (AIR) has released their final report, [***The Impact of Transitional Kindergarten on California Students***](#). Along with the Heising-Simons Foundation and The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, First 5 California provided the funding for this study of California's newest early childhood education program.

AIR began studying California's Transitional Kindergarten (TK) in 2012. This report builds on previous findings released by AIR on the benefits of TK. Beyond the significant advances that build stronger math and literacy skills, additional benefits include increased engagement with their own learning, compared to students who did not attend TK.

- TK gives students an advantage at kindergarten entry on a range of literacy and mathematics skills, including letter and word identification, phonological awareness, expressive vocabulary, problem solving, and knowledge of mathematical symbols and concepts. Students who attended TK also were rated by their teachers as more engaged compared to their peers. These advantages are notable given the large percentage (over 80 percent) of students in the comparison group who attended preschool while eligible students were enrolled in TK.
- TK is effective for all groups of students who participated. It showed a particularly notable impact on language skills for English learners and mathematics skills for low-income students at kindergarten entry.
- TK has no detectable impact on students' executive function or incidence of problem behaviors at kindergarten entry.
- Impacts of TK are smaller at the end of kindergarten, though TK students continue to have an advantage over non-TK students on letter and word identification skills. Overall, non-TK students appeared to catch up with their TK peers on most measures, although both TK and comparison students demonstrated growth at or above what would be expected for their

age on several assessments. The impact of TK on the literacy and mathematics skills of low-income and Hispanic students also persisted through kindergarten.

- There was little variation in the impact of TK by classroom or instructional characteristics. Stand-alone classrooms were not significantly different from TK/ kindergarten combination classrooms in their impact, half-day and full-day classrooms showed similar effects, and differences in assessed quality of teacher-child interactions did not change the program's impact. These findings suggest TK's positive impact for students may be driven by the characteristics that TK programs have in common (and that make TK a unique approach to prekindergarten): credentialed teachers with bachelor's degrees, close alignment with kindergarten, and inclusion of students from all income levels.

"This report captures how TK serves its intended children, and how it might have implications on how TK does, and should, influence pre-kindergarten and kindergarten policy in California," said Camille Maben, Executive Director of First 5 California. Ms. Maben added, "The TK experiment seems to be working in California for our TK eligible children—what can we learn moving forward?"

To view more on this study, including links to reports and briefs, visit AIR's [website](#). ✱



**2018 CHILD HEALTH, EDUCATION,
AND CARE SUMMIT:**
California—Leading the Way for Children

Save the Date!

APRIL 10–12, 2018

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A FOCUS on “One Voice” in the State ECE Budget Debate

The final 2017–18 Budget Act, signed by Governor Brown last month, provided another year of significant wins for First 5s and our Early Care and Education (ECE) Coalition partners in the final child care budget package. With four solid years of major gains in the state budget, significant progress has been made because of the ECE field’s unified sense of priority and message in the Capitol. Yet, so much more is left to be achieved.

During this budget cycle, the “one voice” in the child care field was again recognized by legislative leadership, and it yielded sizeable outcomes.

First, the multi-year deal on child care funding between the Legislature and Governor was kept, resulting in \$210 million in crucial per-child funding increases and increased preschool slot access. Embedded in this multiple-year deal was more progress toward achieving the Preschool Promise of 2014, with nearly 3,000 new full-day preschool slots. The 2014 Preschool Promise set a goal to serve all eligible and interested four-year-olds statewide in the California State Preschool Program. Prior to this year’s budget deal, Children Now was estimating that we were 70 percent to the Promise’s goal. Assuming the deal holds, more preschool slots are expected in next year’s budget as well.

In addition to maintaining the multi-year deal, the final budget adopts the policy of the First 5 California, Parent Voices, and Child Care Law Center sponsored bill, AB 60 (Santiago/Gonzalez Fletcher), and fully funds the policy. This policy provides critical increases to income eligibility requirements for state subsidized care. The new law updates child care eligibility to 70 percent of the current State Median Income (SMI), taking into account the increasing state minimum wage and cost of living in California. The budget also implements a continuous 12-month eligibility period for families until their income

exceeds 85 percent of the SMI. Perhaps most importantly, the new law sets the long-coveted policy that these eligibility levels will be updated each year and no longer will be part of the annual budget fight.

Year after year, the ECE community has made consistent strides toward their shared priorities of access, adequate funding, and quality—despite the enormous challenge of expensive competing interests in the budget and starting each budget fight at zero in the Governor’s January Budget. These two challenges make the existing multi-year deal for rates and preschool slots all the more crucial.

The great strides over the past four years are due in no small part to the clarity and unanimity of voice coming from a large and diverse portion of the ECE field, calling for a short list of crucial investments, and a laser focus on sequential and incremental growth. Equally crucial to this progress has been the strategic leadership positions of the ECE field’s biggest legislative champions in both the Senate and the Assembly. Due to these strengths, the ECE field has been marching with strategic progress toward long-held goals and priorities to stabilize the field, post-Recession, and grow a system that better serves children, families, and educators.

First 5s are now in conversations with our ECE Coalition partners about shared priorities for next year to continue our success with “One Voice.” One area of devastation from the Great Recession that has not yet been touched, and is a stated priority for the Legislative Women’s Caucus, is the loss of infant and toddler child care access. Many advocates anticipate the increasing of slots for infants and toddlers to be at the top of the ECE field’s priorities next year, since only ten percent of currently eligible babies have access to any subsidized care when their parents must return to work. ✱

Camille’s Corner (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

including CARES, CARES Plus, and most recently, First 5 IMPACT. We miss seeing Sarah every day, but are excited about the work we will do together in the future. Read more about Sarah’s move on page 7.

It is full-speed ahead for planning and organizing the 2018 Child Health, Education, and Care Summit, which will be held at the Hilton Los Angeles North/Glendale. Mark your calendars for April 10–12, 2018, for inspiring keynotes, informative sessions, and networking galore. For more information, including opportunities for sponsorships, please visit the [Summit webpage](#).

A big shout-out to First 5 Santa Barbara Executive Director Ben Romo, who hosted us for an inspiring tour of First 5 Santa Barbara. We had the opportunity to visit high-quality family childcare and the center at University of California Santa Barbara, both with strong infant/toddler programs. We spent time with their family resource center network, learning about the strength of their partnerships. A town hall and commission meeting rounded out our visit.

As the sun has gone down in my neighborhood, kids are gathering in the court, and I am headed to the picnic table to visit with my neighbors. ✱

Major sports teams play ball with First 5 California

Leveraging trusted voices within popular culture to help spread First 5 California's important *Talk. Read. Sing.*® message has been a consistent cornerstone of its public education and outreach campaign. A mainstay in this type of outreach is the focus on sports teams throughout the state who have lent their talent, airwaves, digital and social media platforms, and ballparks to influence positive behavior changes in their fans.

Professional sports teams, including the San Francisco Giants, Oakland A's, Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim, Los Angeles Dodgers, Los Angeles Galaxy, and major sports broadcasting networks, such as ESPN, NBC Sports Bay Area, and Fox Sports West, all have partnered with First 5 California in the campaign messaging. Their partnerships have been tremendously effective in bringing unique relevancy and credibility to an audience that can often be challenging to engage.

In its current partnership with the San Francisco Giants and NBC Sports Bay Area, First 5 California has gone

beyond is traditional 30-second commercials to dive even deeper with professional baseball players to shed light on a story not often told—their goals and roles as dads. With a special focus on Bay Area fathers as the target audience, athletes have shown a side of themselves fans don't typically see, one that can be more relatable to the everyday person and show that no matter how busy their lives get, the time they spend talking, reading, and singing with their young kids is critical.

NBC Sports Bay Area has produced several interviews with various Oakland A's and San Francisco Giants athletes. You can watch an exclusive interview with Giant's first baseman and First 5 California spokesperson Brandon Belt talking about engaging with his son Greyson at <http://www.csnbayarea.com/video/first-5-california-brandon-belts-son-greyson-growing-fast>. ✱

Sarah-Neville Morgan Heads to California Department of Education

On July 10, 2017, First 5 California's (F5CA) loss became California Department of Education's (CDE) gain as Sarah Neville-Morgan returned to the CDE as the Director of the Early Education and Support Division. Sarah, as F5CA's Deputy Director of Program Management for many years, has been a respected and valued member of the F5CA family.

Sarah assumes a role that oversees CDE's early learning and care programs, a priority for State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson. Sarah will be providing guidance and leadership that will ultimately affect almost a half-million young learners yearly.

Sarah is a long-time child development specialist and is well-respected in her professional circles for her knowledge and passion about providing children with high-quality early learning.

"Sarah has been the creative core of many First 5 California programs that ensure high-quality care for children," says Erin Gabel, Deputy Director of External and Governmental Affairs, F5CA. "We are extremely proud and happy for her because California's early learners will ultimately benefit from her knowledge and

experience, but like many of my colleagues, we are very sad to see such a talented and supportive team member leave the First 5 bench."

"I will miss everyone at F5CA because we are all part of a committed team with similar goals," adding, "There is a compelling need to ensure CDE and F5CA continue the great work already established by both agencies, as well as our great partnership on California's Quality Rating and Improvement Systems."

Ms. Neville-Morgan adds, "I leave F5CA with the knowledge that I helped in some magnificent programs, such as CARES, CARES Plus, and First 5 IMPACT."

Sarah intends to begin her CDE tenure by being responsive to internal and external stakeholders: listening, engaging, and responding with the goal of improving the quality of early learning services. "Figuring out how to work outside the box is a motivator for continuous improvement, especially with multiple partners. Being a benevolent dictator would be easier, but it wouldn't be better. You must work with your county partners, state agencies, and others to improve quality and bring people together." ✱



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